

First record of Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda* in East Africa

Four adult Orange-cheeked Waxbills were found on 1 June by KD and again (with GB) on 7 June 2003. They were in bushes in open palm swamp where the Nkisi River dissipates into swamp and forest, a few hundred metres from the Ntandi HQ of Semliki National Park in western Uganda (00°48'N, 30°08'E). They were small finches with a red bill, grey head and underparts with a distinct orange patch from cheek to bill base, enclosing the eye, and a pale yellowish centre of belly extending to the vent. The upperparts and wings were dull brown, the rump red and the tail black. They frequently uttered short, high-pitched calls and were foraging low in dense bushes, sometimes flying up to higher, prominent perches. The group of four appeared to be composed of two pairs of adults and, at times, mixed with a small flock of Bronze Mannikins *Lonchura cucullata*. One waxbill was seen catching a newly emerged dragonfly *Orthetrum julia*, a rather large prey item. Although Orange-cheeked Waxbills are known from the vicinity of Bujumbura in Burundi (Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002), this constitutes a new record for the East African list as defined by Britton (1980).

References

- Britton, P. L. (ed) 1980. *Birds of East Africa*. Nairobi: East Africa Natural History Society.
- Stevenson, T. & Fanshawe, J. 2002. *Field guide to the birds of East Africa*. London: T & A.D. Poyser.

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